

SECRET

12 May 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Sprague Committee Consideration of Following Papers:
(a) Examination of Radio Liberty, Radio Free Europe and Radio in the American Section (of Berlin)
(b) The Roles of Attributed and Unattributed Information and the Division of Responsibility between USIA and CIA

1. After consideration of a number of other points which will be adequately covered by the minutes of the Committee meeting, Mr. Sprague introduced the paper on RFE and RL for consideration by the Committee. Mr. Gillion undertook a review of the current draft of the paper, paragraph by paragraph, for the purpose of indicating changes which had been made in the paper since the discussion at the Committee meeting on April 26th. Fortunately, the draft paper containing proposed amendments agreed upon by the DCI and Mr. Meyer was delivered at this exact moment. Mr. Sprague acquiesced in my proposal that additional changes in the language of the paper be considered paragraph by paragraph.

2. The first proposed change was elimination of the last words of the first sentence of paragraph 24. After some discussion, the Committee agreed to the elimination of this phrase. C. D. Jackson, however, reopened the discussion with a statement to the effect that the character of the unofficial radios derived in very large measure from identification with the interests, attitudes and predilections of their audiences as opposed to the official radio which is primarily concerned with portraying the policies and image of the United States. I said that I thought that the unofficial radios were certainly distinguished from VOA by the fact that their programs dealt with internal developments in the Eastern European countries. The point which concerned the Director was the fact that the identification of the radios with the United States was an extremely important factor in their popularity in Eastern Europe. There was some concern lest the present phrasing of the report exaggerate the importance of the European (as opposed to the American) origin of the radios. This point was finally accepted by the Committee which then adjourned for lunch.

SECRET

SECRET

3. On our way to lunch, I had my first opportunity to talk to C. D. Jackson and found that his apprehensions concerning the paper which had been very much apparent after the meeting of the Committee on April 26th had vanished. He seemed prepared to buy the paper verbatim on the theory that its favorable over-all conclusions and endorsement of the programs justified what he considered rather minor concessions. I gathered that he was somewhat opposed to further detailed discussion of the language of the paper on the grounds that it might open up policy issues which, once reopened, might be resolved to our disadvantage. It still seemed to me desirable to make an effort to modify or eliminate at least paragraph 23.

4. After luncheon and in view of the rather lengthy discussion which had taken place of the proposed amendment to paragraph 24, Mr. Sprague suggested and I agreed that further comment regarding specific wording of the report would be limited to matters of major importance. It was agreed that where changes in wording of less than major importance were involved, we would refer directly to the Committee staff. On the theory that the proposed changes in paragraph 25 fell within this definition, I made no effort to incorporate the specific changes suggested in the language of this paragraph. I did point out, for the record, our understanding that the charge of slowness in adjusting the content of radio broadcasts is applicable, if at all, only to Poland. At this point Mr. Sprague asked Ambassador Hare for a statement of his general reaction to the paper and to relations between the State Department and the Agency with respect to the radios. Ambassador Hare said that it was his impression that differences of view had in fact existed in the past and that the State Department felt that difficulties had been experienced in the exercise of satisfactory control over the substance of radio programs. On the other hand, he expressed satisfaction with present arrangements and said that he thought that complete understanding exists at the present time with respect both to the appropriate policy and the measures necessary to enforce this policy. He asked me whether this was my understanding of the situation. I said that this was my impression also. I identified one possible source of continuing dissatisfaction as the point raised by the Director at the last meeting to the effect that the State Department or its representatives had sometimes been slow in communicating whatever criticism or reservations develop concerning particular broadcasts. It is obvious that unless the State Department and its foreign Missions are forthright and prepared to take the initiative in

SECRET

in making their views known, it is difficult for the radios and the Agency to react. We can only accommodate ourselves to a policy which is expressed. In this connection, I pointed out that the wording of paragraph 26.d. imposing a positive responsibility on Missions and Consulates to report more fully and regularly on the impact of programs constituted an improvement on the wording of earlier drafts.

5. Considerable discussion developed about the wording of paragraph 25.a. to the general effect that changes foreseeable in the tone and line of the unofficial broadcasts are not all necessarily in the direction of reducing their concern with internal affairs. It was argued by Gordon Gray as well as by myself that circumstances might require an increase as well as a decrease of emphasis on internal developments in the target countries. C. D. Jackson reiterated views which he had expressed at the 26 April meeting to the effect that the line and substance of the unofficial radios must necessarily deviate from those of the official radios and deploring the fact that the lines were becoming so intermingled as to become indistinguishable. I pointed out that the policy of Government might well justify a sharp divergence of the two lines but that whatever policy was adopted, the Director proposed to follow it. The sense of the Committee was against substitution of the language suggested by the Agency in this paragraph to the effect that where the United States is working through or upon a communist government "RFE should be flexible and responsive to treatment of internal affairs in line with U.S. policies." This proposal was strongly resisted by Ed Cullion and it was finally agreed to modify the language of the existing paragraph by either elimination of the words "reduction or" before modification or by adding the word "increase" before reduction. The sentence will accordingly read "responsive to changing conditions which may call for an increase, reduction or modification of the treatment of satellite internal affairs..." or simply read "modification of the treatment..."

6. The rest of the discussion of this paper was almost entirely devoted to the recommendations of paragraph 25.c. to the effect that consideration should be given to the allocation of frequencies, funds, time and facilities of RFE/RL to VOA and to the recommendation in paragraph 28.

7. The argument on these points was too protracted and diffuse to be worth reproducing in full. Considerable emphasis was put on the impracticability of transferring funds from the unofficial radios for the

SECRET

purpose of enhancing VOA's broadcasts to the Soviet bloc. My argument in favor of deleting the recommendation in paragraph 25.c. was largely based on the proposition that it was illusory. I pointed out that the Director's first reaction was to acquiesce in the proposal for an examination of the possibility of use by VOA of RFE/RL facilities while expressing considerable doubt as to the likelihood that any such use would turn out to be technically, administratively or legally feasible. Further reflection, I said, led us to the conclusion that technical and other obstacles to use by VOA of any of the facilities of unofficial radios were so substantial that it would probably be misleading to permit the inference that anything constructive would result from such an examination. I pointed out that legislation would be required to authorize the transfer of funds from CIA to VOA and was supported in this position by most members of the Committee. Mr. Nielsen pointed out that the purpose of this recommendation was to make some effort to find means to increase unjammed VOA broadcasts without the necessity of recommending the allocation of additional funds for this purpose. This argument was obviously attractive to segments of the Committee and it was agreed that the answer to whether some use of RFE/RL facilities or frequencies by VOA was totally impossible presented such intricate technical questions that the solution of the question should be left to a committee with technical competence. Gordon Gray was still not persuaded, however, that a full case had been made for expansion of VOA broadcasts and Ambassador Hare shared his uncertainty in this respect. Accordingly, it was agreed that a further presentation should be made to the Committee on the sole point of the desirability of increasing VOA broadcasts and that in any event the word "funds" should be removed from the wording of paragraph 25.c. This leaves a probability that the Radio Broadcasting Policy Committee will be seized with an examination of the possibility of transfer of frequencies, time and facilities of RFE/RL to VOA. This, I believe, is undesirable but represents a rather small price to pay for the adoption of the favorable conclusions of the paper as a whole.

8. One further change in paragraph 25.c. concerns the final sentence of the paragraph. This was allegedly inserted as a concession to us. On the other hand, as both Gordon Gray and I pointed out, the inference is that a decision to transfer frequencies and expand VOA will necessarily be in favor of such transfer and expansion. Accordingly, it was agreed that the sentence be amended to include some words to the effect that "if such a transfer of facilities takes place and the situation then alters" the United States should expand the activities of RFE/RL.

SECRET

SECRET

9. As regards paragraph 2d, the point was made that an earlier recommendation of the paper (paragraph 23. c.) had already suggested increasing the volume of VOA broadcasts to the bloc. Therefore, as a practical matter and, assuming the validity of the earlier recommendation, the review suggested in paragraph 28 could only result in a reduction of EFE/RL which would not result in making funds, time or facilities available for broadcasts to other areas, etc. etc. The point was again made that anything which could be done to increase the flexibility of the instruments available to the United States in the information field and facilitate possibilities for their reallocation quickly from one target to another is desirable. It was recognized, however, that as a practical matter a review of the nature proposed in paragraph 28 was not calculated to result in specific reallocations of effort and that the problem suggested should be more properly considered in the context of papers concerned with effort against the bloc as a whole or broadcasting as a whole. Accordingly, it was agreed that paragraph 28 would be eliminated; that consideration of the proper "mix" of activities aimed against the bloc should be reviewed in the staff paper concerned with the Soviet bloc and that the question of the over-all allocation of radio effort as between the bloc, the underdeveloped areas, and the free world generally should be considered in rather broad language in the body of the main report.

10. At this point Abbott Washburn suggested that the Committee should give serious consideration to the question of whether or not two radios are justified at all. In other words, he suggested that the Committee reexamine the entire issue of whether the unofficial broadcasts do not in fact duplicate the facilities of VOA and whether the whole position of the staff and the Committee should not be reexamined. Fortunately, this proposal was disposed of without any very substantial debate.

11. Discussion of the paper on unattributed propaganda was relatively limited. I opened the discussion by comment on recommendation 6 (page 7). I said that while the proposal for regular field evaluation programs in various countries, to be conducted by senior personnel of State, USIA and CIA, was a perfectly intelligent proposal it would impose a rather heavy burden on the bureaucracy. Both Ambassador Hare and Abbott Washburn appeared to agree with the argument that senior officials of all three agencies who are competent to contribute to a review of field

SECRET

SECRET

programs are probably already assigned to positions in the hierarchy which would make their availability for field trips unlikely without doing damage to the efficiency of the existing organization. The existing echelons of review at the country and Washington level should be adequate to perform this function. While the proposal of the report would undoubtedly strengthen the review system, it would be extremely expensive in terms of senior personnel. My second point was that, even if the idea of field inspections was adopted, such organizations as [] for security reasons, should be exempted from the jurisdiction of any such review. It was agreed that this part of the staff proposal should be eliminated. At approximately this juncture the DCI joined the Committee.

12. There was further discussion mostly prompted by Gordon Gray concerning the adequacy of coordination between USIA and CIA with respect to unattributed activity. Certain of us stressed the fact that the problem was not a question of policing the terms of the Gray Treaty and ensuring that USIA abstained from activity which was properly the exclusive concern of CIA. The real problem was to provide for expanded activity in the unattributed area. Accordingly, coordination is not required to maintain jurisdictional franchises but to see that the effort in particular areas was adequate to meet local conditions.

13. Reverting to the problem of field inspection with the further view to exploring possibilities for a more intimate relationship and more effective exchange of views as between USIA and CIA, suggestions were made to the effect that (a) the I.C.s of the respective agencies assume this responsibility and (b) that the Area Directors or Area Division Chiefs undertake joint inspections. Nobody was very enthusiastic about these suggestions. The DCI pointed out that I.C. officers are unlikely to be qualified for such a task and that Area Division Chiefs are extremely busy. It was generally agreed there should be greater uniformity of practice in the field regarding communication between the

SECRET

SECRET

14. The only other discussion of the paper involved my reference to the problem of the proper allocation of responsibility for propaganda,



25X

15. The DCI suggested one further amendment to the paper to the effect that USIA should not disseminate material "based on sensitive sources which require protection." This proposal was agreed.



25X1

John A. Bross
Senior Planning Officer
O/DDP

Distribution:

Orig - DCI
1 - DDCI ✓
1 - DDP
1 - DDP/COPS
1 - ADDP/A
1 - DDP/SPO
1 - C/CA
1 - C/IC

SECRET

SECRET

25X

12 May 1960

100-3495

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: The Sprague Committee

1. This memorandum is for the information of the Director.
2. Annexed is a staff memorandum of the Sprague Committee on the subject of U.S. Resources for Foreign Communication and Political Warfare. Mr. Sprague has asked that members of the Committee review this memorandum and submit comments at the next meeting of the Committee.
3. The Committee will meet all day on Monday, 23 May and on the morning of Tuesday, 24 May.
4. I am circulating a copy of the memorandum in the DDP and will let you have proposed comments prior to the meeting on 23 May.

John A. Bross
Senior Planning Officer
O/DDP

Attachment
As stated
cc: DDCI wo/att.

SECRET

White House